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SOCIETY**



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CULTURAL RESOURCES DIVISION
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Certification of State Register Listing

The Register of Historic Kansas Places includes all Kansas properties nominated to the National Register as well as lower threshold properties which are listed on the state register only.

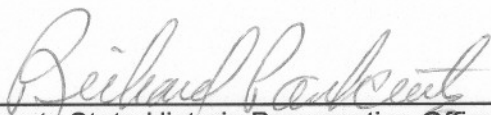
Property Name: **EDGERTON GRANGE HALL**
Address: **400 NELSON, EDGERTON, KS 66021**
County: **JOHNSON**
Legal: **LOT 13, BLOCK 21**
Owner: **CITY OF EDGERTON**
Address: **P.O. BOX 190, EDGERTON, KS 66021**

National Register eligible

State Register eligible **XXX**

This property was approved by the Kansas Historic Sites Board of Review for the Register of Historic Kansas Places on **DECEMBER 12, 1998**.

I hereby certify that this property is listed on the Register of Historic Kansas Places.


Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer


Date

Architectural Description

The Edgerton Grange Hall no.435 is located in section 17, township 15, range 22, Edgerton Lot 13, Block 21, at the Northeast corner of 5th and Nelson Streets in Edgerton, Kansas. It is located at the East end of its two-block commercial district.

The Grange Building was built in 1904 in Edgerton after a fire destroyed the town earlier that same year. All of the new buildings constructed in the downtown area were built of brick, presumably because of its fireproof qualities.

The Edgerton Grange Hall is constructed of brick, laid in the American Common bond. The structure is two stories high. The front, primary facade of the building is six bays in length on the second story. This type of building is commonly known as a two-part commercial block building with a single store, first floor configuration. The original first floor elevation has been altered and enclosed. The original configuration of the main storefront was a center entry with a recessed entrance to the store. The materials of the original have not been removed, just simply covered over in an early 1980s remodeling.

The south facade and the west facade of the structure are the most elaborate, and it seems that they were designed with public view in mind. The brick and detail material are a noticeably higher quality on the two primary facades of the building. The West facade is larger and contains eight bays across the second floor facade and seven bays across the first floor. The windows on the first floor are approximately seven feet above elevation.

A brick entablature embellishes the cornice of the building. The primary facade features two different levels of corbel tabling in different layers of relief, the top level being the deepest in relief. The side facade displays wide bands of a modified corbel table, which adds a subtle horizontal emphasis to the building. The original lettering and construction date on the front facade reading "*Edgerton Grange Hall 1904*" are still in excellent, legible condition.

The windows on the building are topped with segmental arched brick and are embellished with label molding and contrasting brick string coursing to add horizontal emphasis. It is unclear if the bricks are cast white clay or are simply cut stone to resemble the dimensions of the brick on the building. There is no evidence of painting to either the brick or what appears to be stone work. The sills of the windows are cut limestone with an undressed, quarry faced finish. A limestone stringcourse horizontally separates the primary facade of the building.

The overall architectural style is a restrained example of Italianate commercial architecture. The Italianate style dominated mid to late 19th century commercial architectural design in the Midwestern United States. The influence is visible in transitional styles after the turn of the century, even as the Italianate influence began to lose popularity. The verticality of the windows, combined with the implied bracketing of the corbel table along the roofline gives it a stylized similarity of the elaborate, wood, and metal details found upon Italianate commercial

structures of the previous 40 years. It is not uncommon for commercial buildings built in the 1895-1910 span to encompass a variety of architectural influences.

EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS

The exterior and interior have been adaptively used to fit a commercial civic purpose. While the current appearance would suggest a 1980s remodeling of the first floor facade, the first renovation occurred during the 1930s by the WPA. The exterior has since been updated further. The exterior has been covered over with smoked glass and a stone aggregate material. The original materials remain underneath the contemporary cladding materials.

INTERIOR

The interior of the first floor was used as a commercial space for the first thirty years of its history. It is currently used as the town hall by the city of Edgerton. The interior space, which was originally one large uninterrupted space has been divided into offices, a town hall, and reception hall. The original ceiling height has been reduced to approximately 9 feet with metal and fiberglass drop ceiling systems. The original pressed metal ceiling is in place above the replacement drop ceilings. Strangely enough, the kitchen and ceiling height reductions were accomplished during a WPA renovation project in the late 1930s.

The second floor has not been altered as noticeably. The second floor was divided into two major space divisions. The larger space was the primary meeting hall for the Edgerton Grange organization, the smaller room was equipped with a stage and served the community as a small theater and lecture space. There are various sized secondary storage rooms accessible through the larger spaces. The second floor spaces are bisected by an east/west corridor that spans the width of the interior space. Two large double doors with a large transom serve as the entrance to the main meeting hall. The interior floor plan and most of the original finishing materials remain intact and in the original placement.

The only major alteration to the second floor has been the replacement of the original one over one wood, double hung windows, with metal double hung replacement windows. The ceiling in the smaller meeting room has been dropped, but retains historic light fixtures and historic ceiling fans. The original stage backdrop is still in the hall, but in poor condition. Frame partition walls, which create storage bins to the large meeting room have been added. A window has been enlarged and replaced with a metal and glass commercial door to provide emergency egress from the second floor.

Significance:

The Edgerton Grange Hall is Eligible for the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A. It is an important physical reminder of the strength of the Grange organization in rural Midwestern farming communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Founded in 1874, to help protect the interests of small-scale farmers and agricultural communities, the Grange helped unite farmers. This organization provided representation in governmental forums, stabilized local agricultural economies, and protected the interests of small-scale farmers. The Grange Hall was a central part of life in agricultural communities. The Grange organization and the structure in which it was housed represented independence, autonomy, and economic security.

The Hall is also eligible for the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion C, architecture. The Edgerton Grange hall is the largest, most significant building in the commercial strip in Edgerton. It the only two-story masonry building in the community. As such, it possesses a fortress-like quality. It is a very good example of a two-part commercial block, the most common type of commercial building in Main street America. It is the only Grange building in Johnson County to maintain a historic appearance.

The Edgerton Grange Hall is a tangible representation of the Grange movement in Kansas. Once a powerful force, it is now only a shadow of what it once was. This is one of the few remaining Grange buildings left in Johnson County.

On a surface level, the grange was formed merely in response to the sudden and rapid decline in quality of life and grain prices available to small-scale rural farmers. This abrupt change in American agriculture was due in part to economic conditions immediately following the Civil War, and the rapid expansion of the railroad into the Midwestern States.

However, the depth of the philosophical founding of the Grange extends more deeply than a united economic representation in the marketplace. This cooperative brought together the resources of many small towns throughout the Midwest. The Grange organization collectively worked to provide a spiritual, moral, and ethical idealism that was lacing for many people emigrating to the post Civil-War American frontier. This excerpt from a 1960s Grange Organization commemorative best summarizes the essence of the Grange organization.

“An agricultural organization including a great part of the farmers of the nation would be able to demand fairer treatment from the railway corporations and to enforce it with the help of the state; it could use its immense influence to secure favorable legislation on such matters as the tariff, currency, and taxation; by means of a widespread local organization it could gather and disseminate useful information concerning the crops and the markets; and in general it could foster a beneficent spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance among its

members. In this way alone can a satisfactory explanation be found for the widespread and phenomenal movement for organization which appeared among farmers of the seventies."

Railroads were first built in Johnson County in 1869. The communities of Lanesfield and McCamish were abandoned to form the community of Edgerton along the new railroad tracks later that same year. The first Grange hall in Johnson County was organized in 1873: Grange Hall No 68 in Gardner, northeast of Edgerton. Between 1873-4 36 granges were organized in the County. Edgerton's Grange hall was 435. An exact date for the opening of the Edgerton Grange is not available. The Grange organization mushroomed in the early 1870s. For example, the Gardner Grange was No. 68 and the Edgerton Grange was No. 435, yet they opened within a year of each other.

The Edgerton Grangers met in a frame building for the first thirty years of its existence. The organization of the new 1904 building provisioned the Grange to retain rights to the upstairs portion of the building while the first floor was leased to house retail operations. The lower floor housed several businesses in the first few decades of the century. Originally, the first floor commercial space was leased to The Farmers Store. The Farmers Store sold virtually everything which a farmer would need on the farm, from agricultural equipment to domestic dry goods. The onset of the Great Depression ended commercial usage of the structure. The first floor was later used as a dance hall, and even a roller skating rink.

The building was acquired by the town of Edgerton from the Edgerton State Bank in 1938 for \$450. A renovation of the structure later that year was done with WPA laborers. At that time, the first floor's facade transom windows were covered and the interior was renovated. The ceiling was dropped and a kitchen installed in the rear. The building was used for civic and local religious functions for the next 20 years. The city of Edgerton moved into the space in the mid 1960s. It has been in city usage ever since.

Architecturally, the Grange building is the visual focus of downtown Edgerton, Kansas and is a strong reminder of Edgerton's roots as a farming community. As the largest and tallest building in the Edgerton commercial strip, there is a solid, fortress like quality surrounding the Grange Building. The remainder of the commercial structures on the main street are only one story and not nearly as prominent.

The Grange Hall is an excellent example of a turn of the century two-part commercial block. In The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Architecture, Richard Longstreth defines the structure as:

"Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones....the separation reflects the differences of usage inside."